

TWO CASE STUDIES: MARKETING TO TEENS

CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PROJECT TEEN CHICAGO

Anna Batcke, Chicago Historical Society

The Chicago Historical Society undertook a program to make teens the focus of the museum. They did this by mounting a project and an exhibit to document the teen experience in Chicago. Elements of the project included:

- Recruiting a teen council of 15 that acted as staff (and were paid) who, among other things, collected oral histories of citizens about life when they were teens in Chicago
- Teen-appealing products in the gift shop
- Media outreach
- Web site
- Events that included slam poets, punk rockers, break dancers and a mosh pit – all in the museum itself

GOALS

Demystify the museum, create a vibrant sub culture as part of museum's patrons, create support among teens for Chicago's cultural institutions, appeal to educators, parents, donors and media.

RESEARCH ON TEENS

Teens are elusive, mobile, over-committed, diverse, hold broad interests, feel special pressures to achieve, had overwhelming entertainment and social options, were history-resistant, savvy and trend setting.

SOLUTIONS

Create a buzz, stress the innovation of this project, emphasize historical significance of the project, position the teen council as the voice of the project

Importantly, let teens: define the scope of the project, creation of the exhibit, outreach, marketing, fund-raising, Web site.

OBJECTIVES

Everybody needed to want to come see "Project Teen Chicago"

Project brand

- It had to say history, Chicago, hip, urban and not scare Grandma.
- It had to be ongoing for 3-5 years and still remain cool
- Staff worked with the teen council brainstorming images and words
- Staff worked with a subcommittee of the teen council to select colors, images, logotype and then reviewed with museum marketing staff (they choose a logotype that suggested spray painting, "the street," tagging and graffiti)
- Refinement and revision was ongoing in the early stages and teens were involved at every step

EVENTS

- Teen Chicago Rocks the House (dance to introducing the museum as a space for teens)
- Teen Chicago Acts Up (a spoken word event)
- Teen Chicago Steps Out (outreach to neighborhoods)
- Teen Chicago the Next Level (involving more teens in an envisioning process)
- Teen Chicago Film Series (showed films and teens made films)
- Teen Chicago Get Up! Stand Up! (political discussion, civic responsibility)

COLLABORATIONS AND "TREND FORWARD" EVENTS

Young Chicago Authors

Def Jam poets

Hip-hop artists

Old Town School of Folk Music

Media workshops and theatre

Chicago Public Schools

Teenchicago.org

Radio stations

All these events were free and had free food

MARKETING

They used teen e-mail addresses to do direct marketing (and they had to be continually updated because they change all the time)

They employed a teen street team

They ran dual campaigns: one to teens and one to older audience

They made use of postcards, bus "tails", ads in newspapers and culture magazines and asked for feedback on their Web site. They used images from the exhibit, which included yearbook photos from different years.

KEY LESSONS

- Keep teens involved
- Give them credit
- Listen to them
- Empower them

ENJOY THE ARTS PROJECT IN CINCINNATI

Lori Wellinghoff

Enjoy the Arts has been in existence for 25 years serving full-time students in the Cincinnati area. It's a membership-based, all access arts pass. As Lori Wellinghoff bluntly puts it, "We put tight young butts into saggy old seats." For \$25 a year (\$20 to renew), members have access to more than \$350 in free tickets, discounted and bargain \$10 tickets for themselves and a guest to theatre, museums and concerts. Membership includes invitations to "cool" social events and more.

The arts pass is honored by 300-plus arts organizations. Enjoy the Arts acts as a box office for these organizations. The goal is to make patronage more interesting in the aggregate for the hard to reach youth audience.

The organization has a robust online presence, telling students what to wear, where to park, when to clap, etc. They also organize meet and greets, and pre and post party events which focus on both social aspects and demystifying how art is made. They offer membership rewards for referrals.

Membership also provides access to Cincinnati's annual fall 20/20 Festival – 20 days and nights of fun and off-beat art at venues throughout the city. This year's 20/20 Festival included a scavenger hunt in the Cincinnati Art Museum involving the museum's nude paintings.

Enjoy the Arts doesn't have an office, but does have a strong virtual presence at cincinnatiarts.com and at freak-sunite.com.

Research shows that students with an Enjoy the Arts pass attend six events a year, compared to one event a year for non-members.

Enjoy the Arts is available for consultation to help others replicate the program and "destigmatize art for young people across the nation." Lori Wellinghoff is a volunteer for the project; Lisa Mullins is executive director and can be reached at (513) 621-4700.